

Students Using Accelerated Reader® Gain More Than Control Students on Edinburgh Reading Test

Significant Gains Achieved on Neale Reading Accuracy Test

Summarized from: Vollands, S.R., K.J. Topping, and H.M. Evans. "Computerized Self-Assessment of Reading Comprehension with Accelerated Reader: Action Research." *Reading and Writing Quarterly* 15 no. 3 (1999): 197–211.

Research conducted ca. 1995–1996.

Introduction

The implementation of Accelerated Reader at two elementary schools in Aberdeen, Scotland had a positive impact on student reading achievement and attitudes.

Study Description

Two elementary schools in Aberdeen, Scotland, implemented Accelerated Reader as part of a U.K. pilot program. The student population consisted of mixed abilities including special education and students learning English as a second language. The schools were located in a low socio-economic area and were divided into two separate project studies—A and B.

Teachers received training in a single day and had access to approximately 100 Accelerated Reader book titles. Two standardized tests, the Shortened Edinburgh group reading test of silent reading comprehension¹ and the Neale test of oral reading accuracy and reading comprehension², were administered to all students in both projects at the beginning and end of the six-month experimental period.

Project A school contained two sixth-grade classes—Accelerated Reader and non-Accelerated Reader. The non-Accelerated Reader control group included 12 students whose reading skills were comparable to the 27 students in the Accelerated Reader class. During the first five weeks of the six-month project, the Accelerated Reader students received only 15 minutes of class reading time per day. This reading time was increased to 30 minutes of "reading independently" time, combined with 30 minutes of "reading to" time provided by the classroom teacher. Some Duolog Reading™ was also incorporated into the Accelerated Reader class. The 12 students in the control group were given regular classroom instruction with 30 minutes of class reading time per day. Likewise, these students gave written feedback to the teacher on the completed books they read.

Project B school included an Accelerated Reader class of 24 sixth-graders and a non-Accelerated Reader class of 26 fifth-graders. Accelerated Reader implementation with Project B was more problematic than that of Project A, because Project B's Accelerated Reader students received only 20-30 minutes of reading time per day, and no other Reading Renaissance® techniques were incorporated. The control group for Project B consisted of an alternative treatment (AT) class of younger, more able readers. The AT class was given 15 minutes of silent reading time per day, along with 20 minutes of group oral reading one to three times per week. The AT students were also required to do many homework assignments and supplemental exercises in conjunction with regular classroom reading instruction.

(more information on back)

Main Findings

- After just six months, Accelerated Reader students showed significant gains on the Edinburgh reading comprehension test and the Neale reading accuracy test.
- Accelerated Reader students exhibited better attitudes toward reading.

Educator Backgrounds

Stacy R. Vollands, a school psychologist in Scotland, was the primary researcher for this project. She has taught in the United States, Europe, and Japan. She now resides in Texas.

Dr. Keith J. Topping is the Director at the Centre for Paired Learning, Department of Psychology, University of Dundee, Scotland. He developed the Duolog Reading technique that is an integral part of the Reading Renaissance program.

Henryka Evans is a research assistant at the Centre for Paired Learning, University of Dundee.

